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## Standards of the Federal Geographic Data Committee

The Federal Geographic Data Committee is tasked to develop geospatial data standards that will enable the sharing of spatial data among producers and users and support the growing National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). Acting under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-16 and Executive Order #12906, FGDC subcommittees and working groups, in consultation and cooperation with state, local, tribal, private, academic, and international communities, develop standards for the content, quality, and transferability of geospatial data.

The FGDC standards program operates under a few basic guiding principles. FGDC standards are: developed through a structured process; integrated with one another to the extent possible; are supportable by the current vendor community but are independent of specific technologies so they may evolve as technology and institutional requirements change; and they are publicly available.

At present, the FGDC has formally endorsed four geospatial data standards. They are the *Spatial Data Transfer Standard (SDTS)*, *Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata*, *Cadastral Data Content Standards* and *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States*.

The primary responsibility of the Standards Working Group (SWG) is to support the various FGDC standards activities. The SWG provides guidance on FGDC standards policy and procedures and coordinates standards projects within the FGDC and between the FGDC and other standards bodies, such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the U.S. Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The SWG reviews and approves all standards proposals submitted to the FGDC and reviews all standards for compliance to FGDC policy and procedures. Development of standards mostly occurs in the subcommittees and working groups of the FGDC, but the SWG may sponsor the development of standards that crosscut the thematic subcommittees.

### FGDC STANDARDS REFERENCE MODEL

The *FGDC Standards Reference Model* provides the guiding principles for the FGDC standards program. It defines the expectations of FGDC standards, describes the different types of geospatial standards, and documents the FGDC standards process, including the role of the SWG. Additional guidelines are given through a set of Directives that document specific procedures within the many areas of standards development. Current directives include the development and approval process, completing a standards proposal, and conducting a public review. Additional directives are under development.

### STANDARDS WORKING GROUP

## STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

FGDC standards follow a five stage development and approval process to ensure they are created in an open and consensus driven manner, with the widest possible participation by the non-federal community, and that they are integrated with other FGDC standards. At the **Proposal Stage** the SWG reviews and approves proposals submitted by any FGDC or other organization to adopt or adapt an existing or create a new standard. During the **Project Stage** a development work group is formed and the development methodology and schedule are established. During the **Draft Stage** a working draft and then a committee draft for public review is generated. At this stage, input is received from as many interested parties as possible. The **Review Stage** consists of a series of public and internal reviews of the standard by the SWG, the FGDC Coordination Group, and the public. The standard undergoes revisions based on these reviews and the document is prepared for final approval. In the **Final Stage**, the standard receives formal endorsement by the FGDC Steering Committee.

## HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

The SWG home page on the World Wide Web contains information on the SWG and on all approved FGDC standards projects. On the home page you will find the SWG charter, membership list, membership policy, yearly work plans, meeting schedules, and meeting minutes. You will also find the *FGDC Standards Reference Model* and a current list of all FGDC standards, along with their status in the development and approval process. Links are provided to the home pages of other FGDC subcommittee and working group, to other related standards activities, such as ANSI and ISO, and to specific standards documents. The SWG home page is accessed either through the FGDC home page at url: <http://www.fgdc.gov/> (then select Standards), or directly at url: <http://www.fgdc.gov/SWG/swg.html>. Comments and requests may be sent by e-mail to [gdc@usgs.gov](mailto:gdc@usgs.gov).